



Early Childhood and Child Care in Summary

September quarter 2016

This publication provides information on children in approved child care services across Australia for the September quarter 2016.

Key findings for the September quarter 2016 include:

- 1,288,480 children attended approved child care, up 1.5 per cent since the September quarter 2015.
- 873,790 families had at least one child in approved child care, an increase of 1.7 per cent since the September quarter 2015.
- 18,187 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 2.2 per cent since the September quarter 2015.
- The total estimated Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate entitlement was \$1,921.1 million, up 3.9 per cent since the September quarter 2015.

Introduction

This report presents information on the numbers of children and families using approved child care, the costs of care and the numbers and types of child care services in Australia. It includes data from the Child Care Management System (CCMS), MyChild website, Department of Human Services and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

During the September quarter 2016, 873,790 families used approved child care services for their 1,288,480 children.

- In terms of affordability, 92.7 per cent of these families are estimated to have received Child Care Rebate (CCR), with up to 50 per cent of their out-of-pocket costs covered by the Australian Government.
- In terms of availability, in the September quarter 2016, there were 18,187 services providing approved child care services across Australia.

Table 1: Child care children, families, services and estimated entitlements by state and territory, September quarter 2016

State and territory	Number of children using approved child care ¹	Number of families using approved child care ¹	Number of approved child care services	Estimated Child Care Benefit (CCB) entitlement ¹ ('000)	Estimated Child Care Rebate (CCR) entitlement ¹ ('000)	Estimated number of families receiving CCR ¹
NSW	435,060	297,720	6,380	\$307,286	\$369,583	273,400
Vic.	320,880	212,330	4,153	\$288,192	\$259,494	197,360
Qld	289,820	196,140	3,656	\$201,707	\$195,132	181,670
SA	86,230	58,240	1,331	\$44,264	\$49,033	54,520
WA	97,530	68,990	1,703	\$52,246	\$75,083	64,470
Tas.	23,010	15,930	387	\$11,804	\$12,164	14,730
NT	9,890	6,990	193	\$4,131	\$10,062	6,770
ACT	29,100	19,870	384	\$8,612	\$32,327	19,400
Australia	1,288,480	873,790	18,187	\$918,241	\$1,002,877	810,110

¹ As families and children may use services in more than one state or territory and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Child Care Usage

Children

During the September quarter 2016, 1,288,480 children used approved child care in Australia, up by 1.5 per cent since the September quarter 2015. For children aged 0–12 years using approved child care, this represents 31.9 per cent of the 3,974,400 children aged 0–12 years in Australia.

During the September quarter 2016, children attended various services providing approved child care, including Long Day Care (694,500 or 53.9 per cent), Outside School Hours Care (417,650 or 32.4 per cent), Family Day Care and In-Home Care (211,700 or 16.4 per cent), and Occasional Care (6,530 or 0.5 per cent).

Table 2: Number of children using child care by service type, September quarter 2015 to September quarter 2016

Service type	Sep. 15	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16
Long Day Care	676,050	685,760	677,380	660,370	694,500
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	227,990	224,910	212,820	210,570	211,700
Occasional Care	7,380	7,100	5,960	6,270	6,530
Outside School Hours Care	398,730	368,650	409,370	413,010	417,650
Total¹	1,269,190	1,247,820	1,242,470	1,250,270	1,288,480
<i>Per cent of Australian population²</i>	<i>31.8%</i>	<i>31.3%</i>	<i>31.2%</i>	<i>30.9%</i>	<i>31.9%</i>

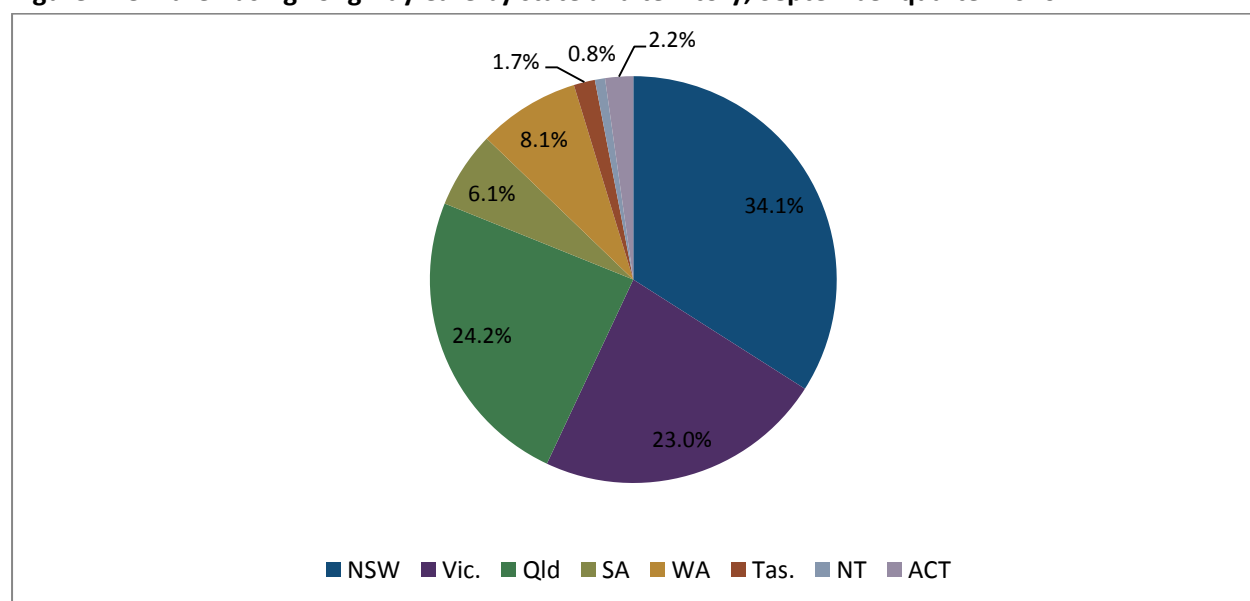
1 As children may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

2 Number of children aged 0–12 years using approved child care as a proportion of all Australian children aged 0–12 years.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data, ABS Cat. No. 3101.0 Australian Demographic Statistics, Sep. 2016.

In the September quarter 2016, the largest proportion of children attending Long Day Care was in New South Wales (34.1 per cent), followed by Queensland (24.2 per cent) and Victoria (23.0 per cent).

Figure 1: Children using Long Day Care by state and territory, September quarter 2016



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Table 3: Number of children using child care by service type and state and territory, September quarter 2016

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	236,720	159,780	167,770	42,390	56,280	11,740	5,640	15,470	694,500
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	79,230	70,860	33,090	8,720	13,080	4,670	500	2,420	211,700
Occasional Care	2,420	2,470	400	120	850	130	0	150	6,530
Outside School Hours Care	129,940	96,910	96,890	37,860	32,460	8,100	3,940	11,890	417,650
Total¹	435,060	320,880	289,820	86,230	97,530	23,010	9,890	29,100	1,288,480

1 As children may use more than one service type in more than one state or territory in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

While most children who used approved child care, used services located in major cities (1,012,170 children), around one in five (283,120 or 22.0 per cent) children used services located in regional and remote areas.

Table 4: Number of children using child care by service type and region, September quarter 2016

Service type	Major cities of Australia	Regional ¹ and Remote Australia ²	Total ³
Long Day Care	524,630	171,940	694,500
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	171,700	41,130	211,700
Occasional Care	3,870	2,660	6,530
Outside School Hours Care	340,920	77,800	417,650
Total³	1,012,170	283,120	1,288,480

1 Includes Inner and Outer Regional

2 Includes Remote and Very Remote

3 As children may use more than one service type in more than one region in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

During the September quarter 2016, for all types of child care, the average time that a child spent in approved child care was 25.3 hours per week. This compares with children who used Long Day Care who attended for an average of 28.7 hours per week.

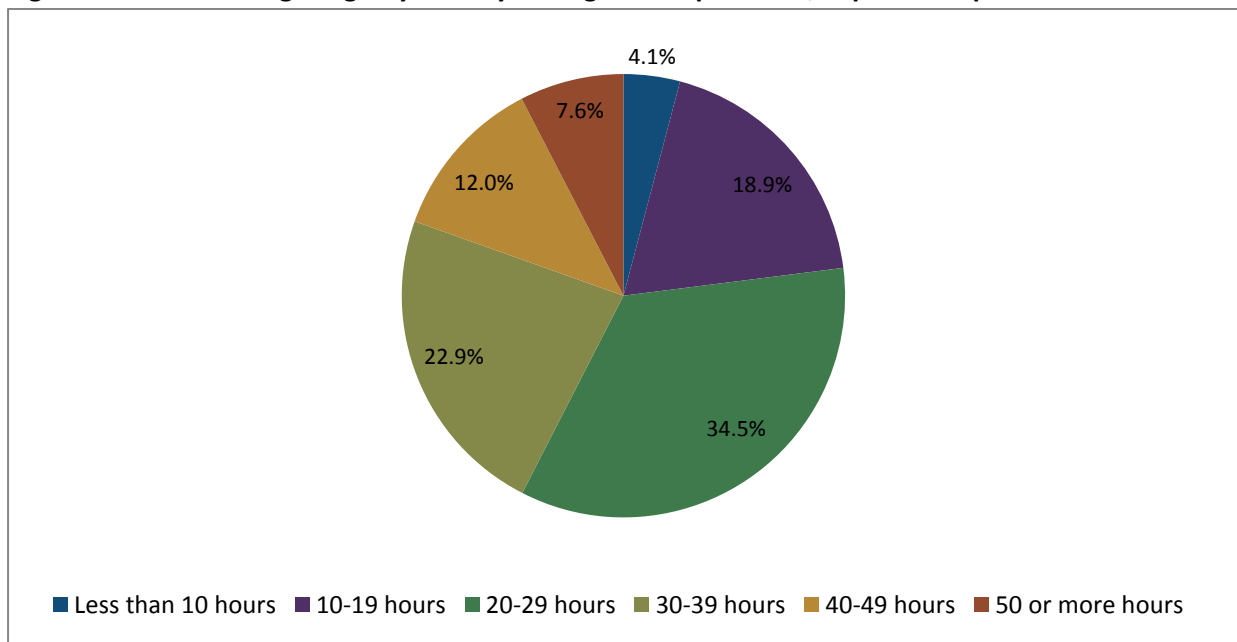
Table 5: Average weekly hours in child care by service type, September quarter 2015 to September quarter 2016

Service type	Sep. 15	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16
Long Day Care	28.4	28.1	28.3	28.1	28.7
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	32.9	31.2	31.8	30.9	31.3
Occasional Care	12.1	11.8	12.2	11.8	12.3
Outside School Hours Care	11.7	10.3	12.1	10.7	11.7
Total	25.7	24.9	25.3	24.4	25.3

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

For children using Long Day Care, 34.5 per cent used 20-29 hours per week in the September quarter 2016.

Figure 2: Children using Long Day Care by average hours per week, September quarter 2016



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Families

During the September quarter 2016, there were 873,790 families using some form of approved child care for their children, an increase of 1.7 per cent since the September quarter 2015. The number of families using Family Day Care and In-Home Care has decreased by 5.7 per cent since the September quarter 2015.

Table 6: Number of families using child care by service type, September quarter 2015 to September quarter 2016

Service type	Sep. 15	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16
Long Day Care	550,640	556,450	546,880	543,360	565,900
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	127,990	126,080	120,770	119,860	120,680
Occasional Care	6,160	5,940	5,000	5,300	5,440
Outside School Hours Care	283,920	263,650	288,310	293,370	296,970
Total¹	859,380	848,200	843,000	852,160	873,790

¹ As families may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

In the September quarter 2016, 297,720 families (34.1 per cent) had children attending approved child care in New South Wales, followed by 212,330 families (24.3 per cent) in Victoria and 196,140 families (22.4 per cent) in Queensland.

Across Australia, nearly two-thirds (565,900 or 64.8 per cent) of all families had children in Long Day Care and around one-third of families had children in Outside School Hours Care (296,970 or 34.0 per cent).

Table 7: Number of families using child care by service type and state and territory, September quarter 2016

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	195,510	131,510	131,680	35,070	46,270	9,540	4,710	12,720	565,900
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	46,580	35,770	20,540	5,240	7,980	3,230	350	1,470	120,680
Occasional Care	2,030	2,070	320	90	700	100	0	130	5,440
Outside School Hours Care	93,180	69,620	68,050	26,340	22,890	5,720	2,900	8,510	296,970
Total¹	297,720	212,330	196,140	58,240	68,990	15,930	6,990	19,870	873,790

¹ As families may use more than one service type in more than one state or territory in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Indigenous children and families

During the September quarter 2016, 32,080 Indigenous children (2.5 per cent of all children) used approved child care in Australia. The number of Indigenous children using approved child care has increased by 6.2 per cent since the September quarter 2015.

Table 8: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type, September quarter 2015 to September quarter 2016

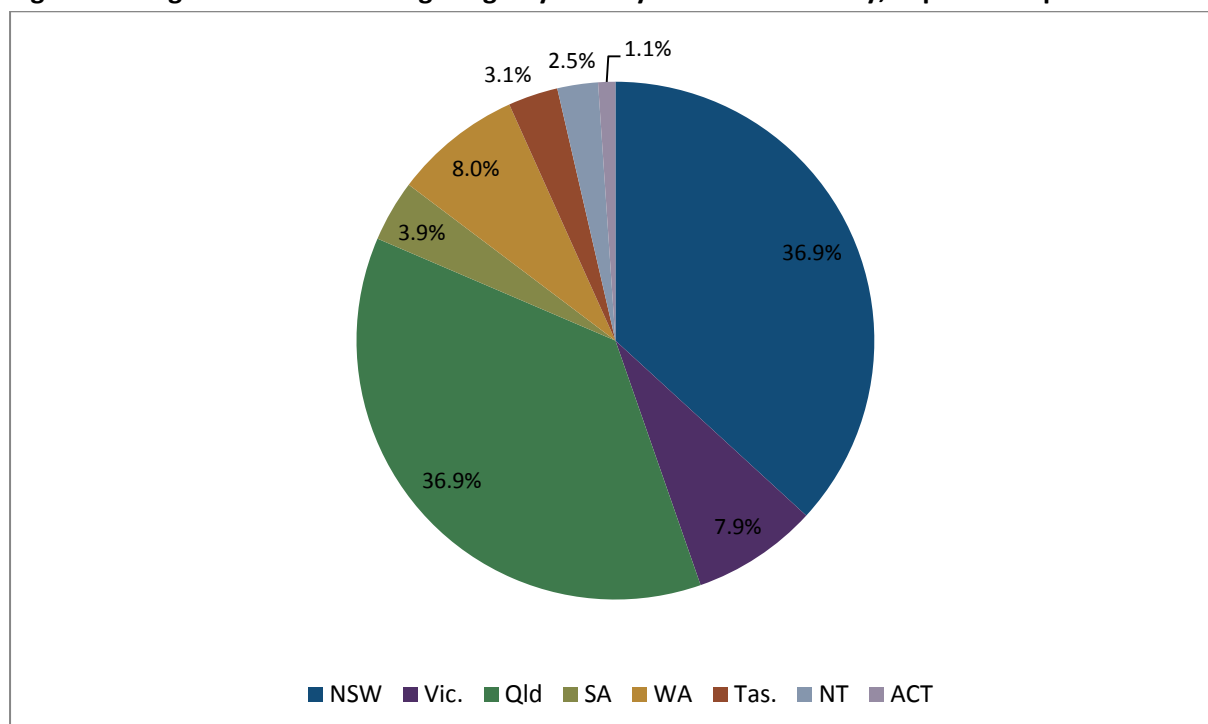
Service type	Sep. 15	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16
Long Day Care	19,120	19,130	19,150	19,050	20,280
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	4,590	4,620	4,640	4,610	4,660
Occasional Care	210	190	170	200	240
Outside School Hours Care	7,220	6,620	7,500	7,570	7,920
Total¹	30,210	29,710	30,180	30,470	32,080

¹ As children may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

The largest proportion of Indigenous children attending Long Day Care was in New South Wales and Queensland (both 36.9 per cent).

Figure 3: Indigenous children using Long Day Care by state and territory, September quarter 2016



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Compared with all children, a smaller proportion of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years attended approved child care, in each state and territory (14.5 per cent of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years, and 31.9 per cent all children aged 0–12 years, nationally).

Table 9: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type and state and territory, September quarter 2016

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	7,480	1,600	7,480	780	1,620	630	520	220	20,280
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	1,950	570	1,390	140	220	340	40	40	4,660
Occasional Care	150	40	20	10	20	10	0	10	240
Outside School Hours Care	2,540	730	2,600	560	590	370	400	140	7,920
Total Indigenous children using approved child care¹	11,750	2,850	11,190	1,450	2,340	1,270	940	390	32,080
<i>Per cent of Indigenous population²</i>	<i>17.0%</i>	<i>17.7%</i>	<i>16.7%</i>	<i>11.8%</i>	<i>8.5%</i>	<i>15.7%</i>	<i>4.8%</i>	<i>20.6%</i>	<i>14.5%</i>

1 As children may use more than one service type and use services in more than one state or territory in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

2 Number of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years using approved child care as a proportion of all Indigenous children aged 0–12 years.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data and ABS Cat. No. 3238.0 Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 2001 to 2026 (30 April 2014).

Almost half of all Indigenous children who attended child care did so in regional or remote Australia (15,690 children or 48.9 per cent).

Table 10: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type and region, September quarter 2016

Service type	Major cities of Australia	Regional ¹ and Remote Australia ²	Total ³
Long Day Care	9,900	10,490	20,280
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	2,560	2,140	4,660
Occasional Care	100	140	240
Outside School Hours Care	4,520	3,410	7,920
Total³	16,620	15,690	32,080

1 Includes Inner and Outer Regional

2 Includes Remote and Very Remote

3 As children may use more than one service type in more than one region in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

During the September quarter 2016, 22,050 Indigenous families used approved child care, an increase of 6.2 per cent since the September quarter 2015.

Table 11: Number of Indigenous families using child care by service type, September quarter 2015 to September quarter 2016

Service type	Sep. 15	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16
Long Day Care	14,890	14,830	14,850	15,030	15,820
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	2,800	2,790	2,820	2,810	2,820
Occasional Care	170	160	140	170	190
Outside School Hours Care	4,960	4,560	5,040	5,170	5,380
Total¹	20,770	20,410	20,690	21,140	22,050

¹ As families may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

More than one third (8,280 or 37.5 per cent) of Indigenous families had children in approved child care located in New South Wales; another third (7,520 or 34.1 per cent) had children in approved child care located in Queensland.

Table 12: Number of Indigenous families using child care by service type and state and territory, September quarter 2016

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	5,990	1,270	5,600	620	1,260	510	420	190	15,820
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	1,220	290	810	80	140	230	30	30	2,820
Occasional Care	120	30	10	<10	20	10	0	<10	190
Outside School Hours Care	1,740	500	1,750	380	370	260	290	110	5,380
Total¹	8,280	1,910	7,520	980	1,610	880	660	280	22,050

¹ As families may use more than one service type and use services in more than one state or territory in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Availability

Services

During the September quarter 2016, 18,187 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 2.2 per cent (386 services) since the September quarter 2015. There were 10,136 Outside School Hours Care services which accounted for 55.7 per cent of all services and 7,027 Long Day Care services which accounted for 38.6 per cent of all services.

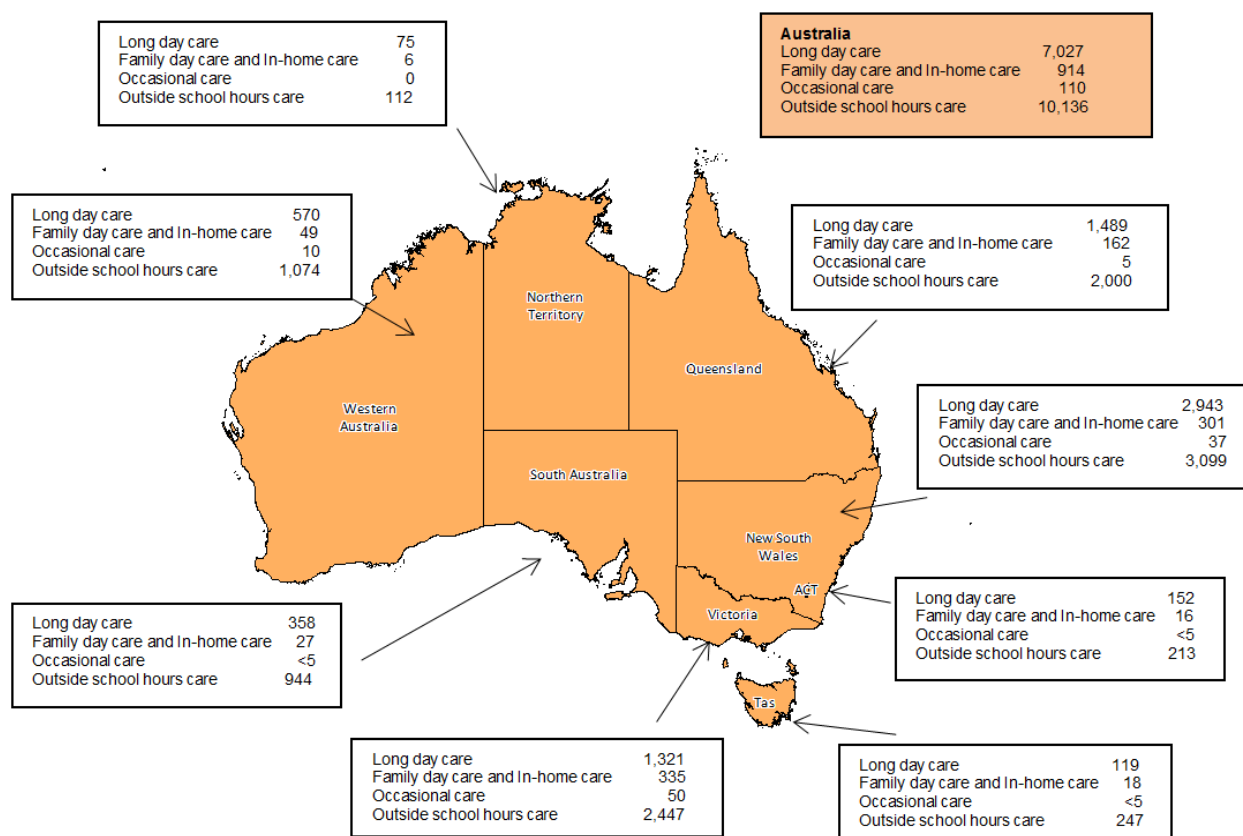
Table 13: Number of child care services by service type, September quarter 2015 to September quarter 2016

Service type	Sep. 15	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16
Long Day Care	6,755	6,804	6,862	6,932	7,027
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	851	860	858	887	914
Occasional Care	115	115	111	110	110
Outside School Hours Care	10,080	9,120	9,825	10,065	10,136
Total	17,801	16,899	17,656	17,994	18,187

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

In the September quarter 2016, around one third of services were located in New South Wales (35.1 per cent), with 22.8 per cent in Victoria and 20.1 per cent in Queensland.

Figure 4: Number of approved services by service type and state and territory, September quarter 2016



Affordability

Costs of care before Australian Government fee assistance

The average hourly child care fee for all service types in the September quarter 2016 was \$8.75, an increase of 5.8 per cent since the September quarter 2015. Fees varied across service types from a high of \$10.05 per hour for Occasional Care services to a low of \$6.95 per hour for Outside School Hours Care services.

Table 14: Average hourly fee by service type, September quarter 2015 to September quarter 2016

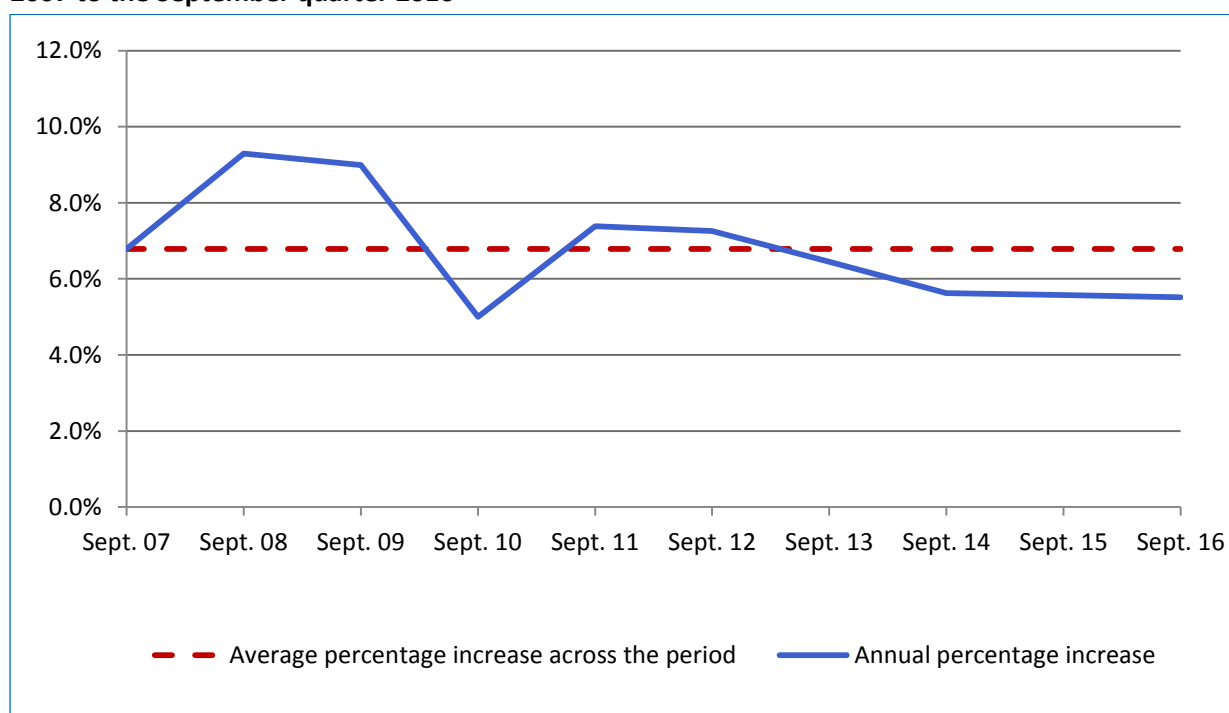
Service type	Sep. 15	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16
Long Day Care	\$8.50	\$8.50	\$8.80	\$8.90	\$9.00
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	\$8.25	\$8.55	\$8.65	\$8.80	\$8.90
Occasional Care	\$9.70	\$9.65	\$9.80	\$9.90	\$10.05
Outside School Hours Care	\$6.60	\$6.80	\$6.70	\$7.05	\$6.95
Total¹	\$8.25	\$8.35	\$8.50	\$8.65	\$8.75

¹ Hourly fee for each service type is calculated by dividing the sum of all fee amounts by the sum of all hours for each service type.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

The average hourly fee for Long Day Care increased by 5.5 per cent from the September quarter 2015 to the September quarter 2016. This increase compares with the average annual percentage increase of 6.8 per cent for the period from the September quarter 2007 to the September quarter 2016.

Figure 5: Average and annual percentage change to Long Day Care hourly fees, September quarter 2007 to the September quarter 2016



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

The Australian Government subsidises the cost of child care for eligible families through the Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate to help parents with the cost of approved child care. During the September quarter 2016, the total estimated expenditure on Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate was \$1,921.1 million. The majority (\$1,269.4 million or 66.1 per cent) of this was paid in relation to families using Long Day Care services.

Table 15: Total estimated Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate entitlements by service type, September quarter 2016

Service type	Child Care Benefit ('000)	Child Care Rebate ('000)	Total ('000)
Long Day Care	\$496,599	\$772,814	\$1,269,413
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	\$357,641	\$124,259	\$481,900
Occasional Care	\$1,643	\$2,384	\$4,027
Outside School Hours Care	\$62,358	\$103,420	\$165,778
Total	\$918,241	\$1,002,877	\$1,921,118

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data – based on estimated entitlements.

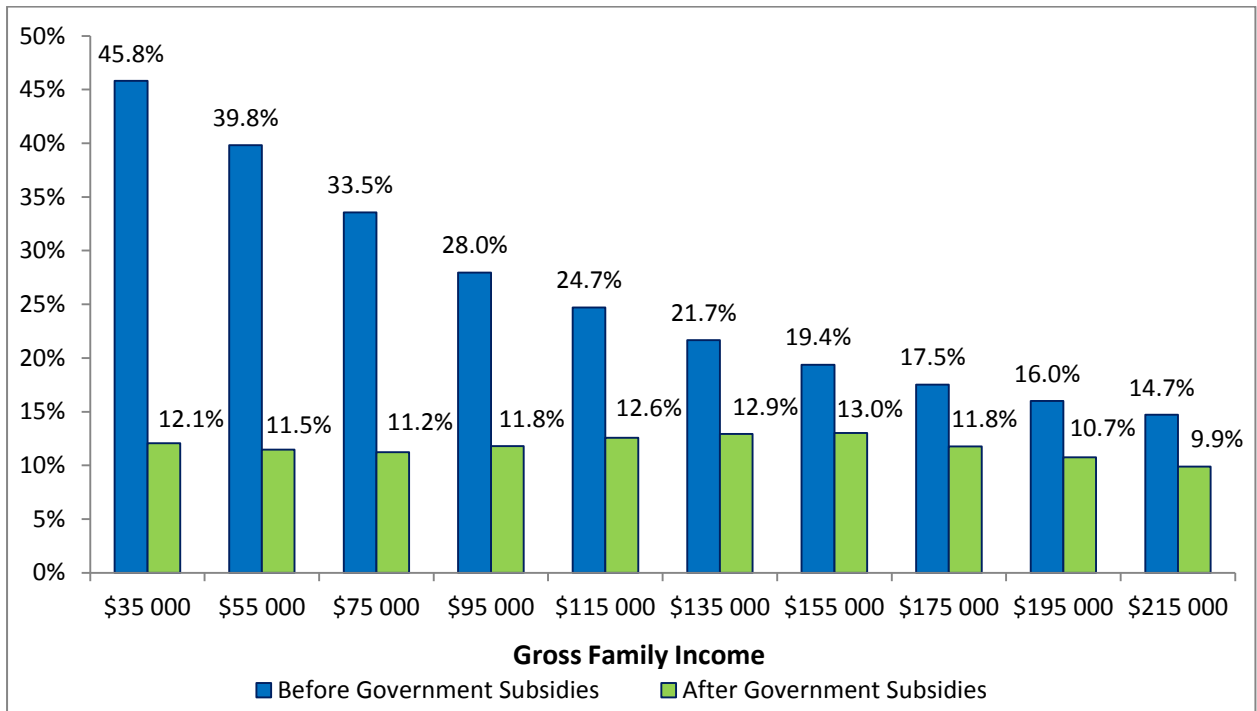
Costs of care after Australian Government fee assistance

The child care out-of-pocket costs for families are determined by a combination of the fees services charge, the type of child care used, the amount of care used by families for their children and the amount of Australian Government subsidies that families are entitled to.

Before Australian Government child care subsidies were taken into account, out-of-pocket costs for families varied from 45.8 per cent of weekly disposable income for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year, to 14.7 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$215,000 per year.

After Australian Government child care subsidies, out-of-pocket costs were significantly reduced, varying from 12.1 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year, to a high of 13.0 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$155,000 per year and 9.9 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$215,000 per year.

Figure 6: Out-of-pocket costs¹ for one child in Long Day Care before and after Australian Government subsidies, March quarter 2016



¹ Out-of-pocket costs (before and after Australian Government subsidies) are shown for families with one child aged less than 5 years old using Long Day care for 50 hours of care per week. This takes into account the CCR cap (of \$7,500).

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Additional Assistance

JET Child Care Fee Assistance

In the September quarter 2016 there were 8,600 families assisted with Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA). This represented 1.0 per cent of the total number of families who used approved child care services.

Table 16: JET Child Care Fee Assistance usage, September quarter 2015 to September quarter 2016

	Sep. 15	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16
Number of children assisted	14,370	12,930	12,060	12,380	12,470
Number of families using JETCCFA	9,900	8,900	8,400	8,640	8,600
Average hours per week per child	26.5	26.2	26.4	26.4	26.6
Estimated JETCCFA entitlement (\$'000)	\$9,916	\$7,977	\$6,866	\$8,945	\$9,313

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Special Child Care Benefit

In the September quarter 2016, 10,870 families were assisted with Special Child Care Benefit. This represented 1.2 per cent of the total number of families who used approved child care services.

Table 17: Special Child Care Benefit usage, September quarter 2015 to September quarter 2016

	Sep. 15	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16
Number of children assisted	15,460	14,540	14,030	14,790	16,520
Number of families using SCCB	10,010	9,370	9,040	9,900	10,870
Average hours per week per child	34.3	34.0	34.4	33.8	34.2
Estimated SCCB entitlement (\$'000)	\$52,014	\$42,232	\$40,619	\$43,575	\$55,771

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit

In the September quarter 2016, 4,470 families were assisted with Grandparent Child Care Benefit. This represented 0.5 per cent of the total number of families who used approved child care services.

Table 18: Grandparent Child Care Benefit usage, September quarter 2015 to September quarter 2016

	Sep. 15	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16
Number of children assisted	6,620	6,850	7,320	7,500	8,220
Number of families using GCCB	3,890	3,940	4,110	4,170	4,470
Average hours per week per child	35.5	35.6	37.1	36.2	37.7
Estimated GCCB entitlement (\$'000)	\$30,363	\$35,171	\$39,401	\$43,748	\$53,492

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Vacancies

Table 16 details the national trend in child care vacancies from the September quarter 2014 to the September quarter 2016 by service type.

Table 19: Child care vacancies by service type, September quarter 2014 to September quarter 2016¹

Service type	Sep-14	Dec-14	Mar-15	Jun-15	Sep. 15	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep-16*
Long Day Care									
Total number of services	6,601	6,623	6,656	6,723	6,755	6,804	6,862	6,932	7,027
Per cent services reporting	91%	90%	91%	91%	91%	91%	92%	92%	92%
Proportion with vacancies	87%	87%	91%	90%	89%	88%	91%	91%	89%
Average vacancies	75,230	70,160	98,510	94,000	86,700	77,440	110,510	106,650	91,980
Family Day Care									
Total number of services	761	772	771	778	786	792	794	823	849
Per cent services reporting	36%	36%	34%	34%	32%	32%	30%	44%	42%
Proportion with vacancies	87%	85%	91%	89%	87%	90%	89%	87%	90%
Average vacancies	8,070	8,400	8,120	8,510	8,410	7,520	7,180	9,270	11,640
Occasional Care									
Total number of services	115	116	116	116	115	115	111	110	110
Per cent services reporting	60%	68%	65%	59%	63%	64%	59%	68%	71%
Proportion with vacancies	51%	47%	55%	51%	55%	54%	60%	56%	56%
Average vacancies	280	310	450	460	390	420	510	460	470
Before and After School Hours Care									
Total number of services	6,589	6,628	6,841	6,911	7,348	6,981	7,177	7,331	7,324
Per cent services reporting	63%	62%	55%	58%	51%	60%	58%	60%	80%
Proportion with vacancies	91%	91%	90%	91%	90%	92%	91%	92%	93%
Average vacancies	107,900	109,790	92,350	102,770	100,080	119,040	105,750	117,550	187,600
Vacation Care									
Total number of services	2,583	1,977	2,515	2,609	2,732	2,139	2,648	2,734	2,812
Per cent services reporting	59%	75%	58%	55%	55%	57%	55%	55%	60%
Proportion with vacancies	73%	71%	73%	72%	73%	64%	75%	70%	75%
Average vacancies	33,370	32,280	32,020	30,510	34,000	34,100	33,410	30,510	42,920

¹ Data relating to the small number of reporting services with all places not meeting the relevant vacancies definition have not been included in this report.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Technical Notes

General counting rules

All analysis broken down by state in this report corresponds to the *state of the service* rather than the state where the child/family lives.

Use of child care services is counted for each individual child using approved child care services. An instance of child care usage is defined as at least one child care attendance per child care service for the quarter irrespective of duration or frequency. For example, a single hour at an Occasional Care centre or 40 hours per week throughout the quarter at a Long Day Care centre, are both counted as an instance of child care usage.

Children and families are recorded for each of the service types that they use during the quarter. Children and families using more than one service type during the quarter or financial year are counted only once within each applicable service type category and only once within the 'Total' category for the relevant time period. Note that as children and families may use more than one service type in any particular timeframe the sum of the component parts may not equal the 'Total' category.

Changes in service type numbers need to be understood in the context of counting rules. Prior to the implementation of the Child Care Management System (CCMS) all services with an 'active' status were included regardless of attendance. This resulted in a small number of services being included in the data that did not actually have any children in attendance. Under CCMS a service is counted as 'active' only if it had at least one child attending at some time during the quarter, thus aligning the counting rules for children, families and services.

CCB and CCR estimation

The Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) estimation method used in this report:

- Under-estimates CCB as only CCB payments made during the quarter are reported and not the CCB amounts customers were actually entitled to but did not receive (for example because of families over-estimating income or receiving annual or lump sum CCB payments to avoid debts).
- Over-estimates CCR due to under-estimation of CCB.
- Doesn't take into account reconciliation which will adjust the customers' CCB and CCR actual entitlements based on their actual rather than estimated incomes. There is a considerable time lag for the reconciliation process to be complete, this can take a number of years.

Data sources

Data included in this report comes from the following sources:

- The majority of data is extracted from the Child Care Data and Reporting System (CCDARS). CCDARS is a Department of Education and Training based data storage system for data collected from approved child care services via the Child Care Management System.
- Supplementary data is sourced from the MyChild website and the Department of Human Services.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data is included in this report for comparison purposes.

Revisions: Due to changes in the administrative system, data may be revised to ensure the most accurate, up-to-date figures are published.

Vacancy information

All approved services are required to regularly report their anticipated vacancies according to a standard definition, to the Department of Education and Training. For most services, a vacancy is defined as a permanent full day vacancy that the service is willing to fill.

The information contained in this report (Table 16) relates to specific reference weeks. As is standard practice, a reference week is used to represent the quarter and reduce errors due to potential inconsistencies in reporting. For the September quarter 2016, vacancies for Long Day Care, Before and After School Hours Care, Occasional Care and Family Day Care and are reported for the week 5 September to 11 September 2016. Vacancies for Vacation Care are reported for the week 4 July to 10 July 2016 for New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Northern Territory, Western Australia, Tasmania and Australian Capital Territory and 11 July to 17 July 2016 for South Australia.

Definitions

Approved care: Care provided by Long Day Care, Family Day Care and In-Home Care, Outside School Hours Care and Occasional Care services approved by the Australian Government to receive Child Care Benefit on behalf of families.

Average number of vacancies: As services report vacancies for each day of the week, the number of vacancies for each service is averaged out across the weekdays, that is, it is the sum of vacancies on each weekday divided by five. The total number of vacancies in an area is the sum of the average vacancies per service.

Child Care Benefit (CCB): A payment made by the Australian Government to families to assist with the cost of child care.

Child Care Management System (CCMS): This is the electronic system used for the administration of CCB. Under CCMS, approved child care services submit attendance information to the Department of Education and Training over the internet. Data in this report are primarily sourced from the CCMS.

Child Care Rebate (CCR): A payment made by the Australian Government to assist eligible working families with the out-of-pocket cost of child care. CCR is calculated based on the gap between the fees charged by the child care service and the CCB paid in respect of fee relief. Families who satisfy the work/training/study test requirements may be entitled to receive CCR for 50 per cent of all out-of-pocket costs up to an annual limit.

Family Day Care: Family Day Care educators provide flexible care and developmental activities in their own homes for other people's children on behalf of an approved Family Day Care service.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB): Grandparents with the primary care of grandchildren and who receive an income support payment may be eligible for the Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB). The GCCB covers the full cost of approved child care for up to 50 hours for each child per week. In certain circumstances Grandparents may be able to get GCCB for more than 50 hours per week.

In-Home Care: In-Home Care educators provide flexible care and developmental activities in the child's own home on behalf of an approved In-Home Care service.

Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA): This is a form of government assistance that provides extra help with the cost of approved child care for eligible parents undertaking activities such as job search, work, study, or rehabilitation as part of an Employment Pathway Plan with the Department of Human Services or an employment service provider, to help them to enter or re-enter the workforce.

Long Day Care: This is a centre-based form of child care service. Long Day Care services provide quality all day or part-time care for children of working families and the general community.

Occasional Care: This is a care type mainly for non-school aged children. These services cater mainly for the needs of families who require short-term care for their children.

Outside School Hours Care: Services provide care for school aged children before and/or after school during the school term. Some services also provide care on 'pupil free' days. Vacation Care is also included in this category. Vacation Care services provide care for school children during the school holidays. Vacancies are reported separately for Before and/or After School Hours Care and Vacation Care.

Reference week: For Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Before and/or After School Hours Care and Occasional Care services, the reference week for vacancy information is selected as one of the last available weeks that is not affected by school or other holiday periods and a week that provided a consistent (with other weeks in the quarter) level of services that had reported across the quarter. The reference week includes weekdays only as most services do not operate on weekends. The reference week for Vacation Care is based on each state and territory's school holiday periods.

Region: Regions of Australia are classified according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), July 2011. This classification divides each state and territory into several regions on the basis of their relative access to services.

Reporting services: The services that reported their vacancy information for the reference week. This includes a small number of services that reported vacancy information and indicated they were not operational for the week.

Service: Child care services are approved by the Australian Government to receive CCB on behalf of families. Most Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Before and After School Hours Care, Vacation Care services and some In-Home Care and Occasional Care services are approved child care services. The total number of services refers to the number of services that were active during the September quarter 2015, that is, they had at least one record of child care attendance in the quarter.

Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB): Additional child care assistance provided for children considered to be at risk of serious abuse or neglect, or exceptional cases where a family's income does not truly reflect their capacity to pay the usual charged fee. Special Child Care Benefit is reported as 'child at risk' and 'financial hardship'.

Vacancy: Anticipated availability that child care services are willing to fill for each week they are operational. This is an ongoing full day vacancy for Long Day Care and Family Day Care, full day vacancy for Vacation Care and Occasional Care services and an ongoing full session vacancy for Before and/or After School Hours Care.

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